

For Immediate Release:

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Jesse White Awarded Winners of 17th Annual Illinois Emerging Writers Competition

Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White awarded poets from Chicago and Naperville as this year's winners of the Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Award in the 17th annual Illinois Emerging Writers Competition.

April R. Gibson of Chicago was awarded first place for her poem "Superstar." Aiman Ghani, also from Chicago, received second place for her poem "Mera Asmaan." Joanne Hsu of Naperville was the third-place winner for the second year in a row. Her poem was titled "Abacus."

"I created the Illinois Emerging Writers Competition to promote creative writing and provide an opportunity to recognize new literary talent throughout the state," White said. "Illinois has a long and rich literary heritage and these poets are adding to the tradition established by legendary poet Gwendolyn Brooks. Great poems have the ability to enrich and enhance our lives and I'm pleased to celebrate this year's talented winners."

The competition is named for the late Pulitzer Prize-winning Illinois Poet Laureate Gwendolyn Brooks and is part of the Illinois Center for The Book program at the State Library. Angela R. Jackson, Illinois Poet Laureate, served as the final judge of the competition.

"I am proud that Angela Jackson, a protégé of Gwendolyn Brooks and an award-winning poet, novelist and playwright, serves as our state's Poet Laureate and the final judge of this wonderful contest," said White.

The winners received plaques and cash prizes at an award ceremony at the Illinois State Library with the Illinois Poet Laureate. The winning poems will be submitted for possible publication in "Ninth Letter," "RHINO" and "Quiddity" journals and will also be available to be read at ilsos.gov/departments/library/center_for_the_book.

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